



# ***SAFETY ALERT 02-01***

**17th Coast Guard District**  
**United States Coast Guard**  
**P. O. Box 25517**  
**Juneau, Alaska 99802**  
**907-463-2810 or 800-478-7369 In Alaska**  
**[www.uscg.mil/d17/m/CFVS.shtml](http://www.uscg.mil/d17/m/CFVS.shtml)**

## **CALL FOR A FREE DOCKSIDE EXAM**

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| MSO Anchorage    | 271-6700 | MSD Sitka     | 966-5454 |
| MSO Valdez       | 835-7223 | MSD Ketchikan | 225-4496 |
| MSO Juneau       | 463-2450 | MSD Kodiak    | 486-5918 |
| MSD Dutch Harbor | 581-3466 | MSD Kenai     | 283-3292 |

## **FISHING VESSEL GROUNDS, 3 CREW SAVED,** **OFF KODIAK, ALASKA**

**Background:** The Seventeenth Coast Guard District Safety Alert program provides “Lessons Learned” from marine casualties in support of the Coast Guard’s “Ready for Sea” safety program.

**Incident:** A 44’ longliner was underway in Ugak Bay near Kodiak Island in harsh weather conditions, snowing with 25-knot winds and 7-foot seas on an incoming tide. For the past several days a 44-foot longliner had been in and out of port fishing for cod. The crew fished hard and slept little. After fishing continually for 22 out of 24 hours the master fell asleep while at the helm. The vessel maintained its course until it abruptly grounded on a rocky beach near Pasagshak Bay. The vessel was holed and hard aground with waves pounding and damaging the shelter deck. The crew quickly called a MAYDAY but due to the vessel’s location and poor communications in the area the Coast Guard was not able to hear the message. Fortunately, a vessel in the vicinity heard the MAYDAY and relayed the distress to the Coast Guard. A Coast Guard helicopter was launched from Kodiak and hoisted the three crew from the rapidly flooding vessel. Fortunately, no one was injured. Within an eight-hour period the vessel was driven onto the rocks rendering it a total loss. Oil spilled from the broken hull, which was properly handled at considerable cost to the vessel’s insurer.

**Lessons Learned:** There are “Ready for Sea” safety factors that are relevant to this incident and several “lessons learned”.

1. Sleep deprivation among commercial fishermen is common. Whenever possible, set anchor and catch up on sleep. If anchoring is not possible, consider a two person watch. It is easier to stay awake if you have someone to talk to.
2. Consider installing watch alarms and set them for short intervals. Since a very tired person sleeps heavily, be sure the watch alarm is audible to everyone on board. Test the watch alarm before getting underway and be sure it remains on for the duration of the voyage. Although an alarm can be annoying, it’s better to be annoyed than lose the vessel or worse, lose a life.
3. Get up and move around; do jumping jacks; pace around the wheelhouse; stretch; drink a beverage with caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, etc.); open a window; turn on some lively music; anything so you don’t just sit in the captain’s chair and nod off. The Coast Guard has determined that fatigue is a major contributor to vessel casualties and initiated a new Crew Alertness Campaign, or CAC for short, to highlight the causes and effects of fatigue. Visit the Coast Guard web site at <http://uscg.mil/hq/g-m/cac> to learn more about the CAC. If you don’t have access to the Internet, call the 800 number above for more information.
4. Ensure your vessel can communicate effectively. A VHF radio may not be adequate for communicating with the Coast Guard when operating in much of Alaska’s waters. Carry HF equipment in addition to VHF and ensure you carry all FCC radio permits. Consider having your local radio shop conduct an exam on your equipment to ensure it is properly functioning. An EPIRB is your last resort should VHF or HF communications fail.